

## **SUMMARY**

**Background:** Though there are many studies which analyze the relationship between television viewing habits and the risk of obesity, mental health and academic performance separately, there are very few studies which assess these things simultaneously. Our study is the one with that goal.

**Objectives:** To study the relationship between TV viewing habits and the risk obesity, to study the relationship between TV viewing habits and mental health, & to assess the relationship between TV viewing habits and academic performance.

**Methodology:** We have studied 1019 students from 2 urban schools of Tiruppur city aged 8-12 years, studying in the standards 4<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>, approximately 200 students from each standard between July 2016 & June 2017. A special proforma containing demographic details, TV viewing habits of children, BMI, and mental health was given to the students and they were asked to complete it in their home under parental supervision. Height and weight were taken. Special rating scales to assess the mental health were included in the proforma. Data collected were analyzed using statistical methods like median, Chi- Square test, and Fisher's unpaired 't' test.

**Results and Discussion:** We found that sex were more less equal, almost all belonged to lower middle class and upper low class, most of them were Hindus, 66% viewed more than one hour per day, most preferred music/comedy, cartoons and movies, main reason for viewing was entertainment, more than half snacked or ate during TV viewing, nearly half them were occasionally physically active, regarding BMI, most belonged to underweight category, 8% were overweight & 3% were obese, regarding mental health, 40% showed mild violent behavior, only 3% were severely violent, anxiety was also like that, regarding antisocial behaviors like stealing/lying and school absenteeism only 3% and 2% were frequent liars and absentees respectively, regarding academic performance, around 9% were in the below average category, 46% in the average category.

In our study, we found that there is significant association between duration of TV viewing and risk of obesity. Those who watch more than 2 hours per day were more likely to be overweight or obese. Frequent eating or snacking during TV viewing was significantly associated with obesity. Physical activity though significant, had weak and inverse association with obesity. Regarding mental health, severity of violence, anxiety, stealing/lying and school absenteeism were significantly and strongly associated with duration of TV viewing and the type of program.

Longer the duration more is the severity of these issues. Movies & cartoons are more likely associated with these issues. Likewise longer the duration of TV viewing poorer is the academic performance.

**Conclusion:** Finally, we found significant association between television viewing habits and the risk of obesity, mental health & academic performance. This may help to create awareness among parents and teachers.

Key words; Television viewing, Obesity, Mental health, Academic performance.